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LIBERIA

SUCCESS STORY

Fast and reliable internet connectivity promises to bring vast improvements to Liberia's business environment and make numerous e-government initiatives possible.



Photo credit: IBI International

Liberians watch as the ACE cable linking Liberia to the world's broadband internet backbone arrives on the shore in Monrovia.

USAID Projects Facilitate Public Private Partnership, Help Bring High Speed Internet to Liberia

As part of the Liberia Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) from 2006-2010, and the ongoing Governance and Economic Management Support (GEMS) Program, USAID is providing critical support to the government of Liberia and private sector telecom operators to bring broad-band internet to Liberia.

That support has helped Liberia to be one of 25 countries participating in the Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) undersea fiber-optic cable project that will link West Africa with the world's broadband internet backbone. Fast and reliable internet connectivity promises to bring vast improvements to Liberia's business environment and make possible numerous e-government initiatives.

USAID has funded a series of long-term and short-term experts to facilitate the complex negotiations required to get the ACE cable to Liberia. Initially, USAID-funded experts performed a thorough analysis of the connectivity options available for Liberia and concluded that the ACE cable project represented a singular opportunity to accomplish the connectivity goals of the Government of Liberia.

Those experts then provided a series of presentations and analyses to potential investors that resulted in the formation of the Cable Consortium of Liberia (CCL), a public-private partnership involving the Government of Liberia, the government-run Liberian Telecommunications Company, and private telecom operators Lonestar Cell and Cellcom.

The assessments and analysis funded by USAID proved critical in transforming the initiative from dream to reality, as they helped to convince investors to join the CCL and the World Bank to provide \$20 million in grant funding for the project.

The Phase I primary goal of landing the ACE cable in Liberia is now nearly complete and the Phase II objectives are next on the agenda. These include the Inner Monrovia Fiber Optic Ring that will begin the process of providing fast reliable internet connections throughout Liberia.

With the combined power of private, public, and external partners focusing their energies on bridging the technology gap in Liberia, the future for Liberians is indeed looking bright.